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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KIGALI 000668

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [RW](#)

SUBJECT: RWANDA: FEAR OF MILITARY SOLUTION TO KIVU CRISIS

Classified By: Ambassador Michael R. Arietti for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Ambassador met Minister of Foreign Affairs Charles Murigande on July 20 to discuss GOR concerns about the possibility of a military solution to the situation in the Kivus. Murigande expressed GOR worries that, if a military solution is pursued, DRC President Kabila will be unable to defeat dissident General Laurent Nkunda without resorting to the assistance of FDLR (ex-FAR/Interahamwe) troops. This move would not solve the underlying causes of the crisis, could destabilize the region, and would put pressure on the GOR to take action. Murigande requested U.S. support to encourage Kabila to find a political solution, and said that the GOR is willing to return to talks with the GDRC to resolve the Nkunda dilemma. In a separate conversation on July 20, the Ambassador spoke with Belgian Ambassador Roux to discuss GOB views of the Kivu situation. End summary.

¶2. (C) Minister Murigande invited Ambassador to a July 20 meeting to discuss GOR concerns about the situation in the Kivus in eastern Congo. He said that the ongoing deployment of weapons and movement of FARDC troops to North Kivu and Goma signals an attempt by DRC President Kabila to fight and defeat renegade General Laurent Nkunda militarily. He said that many analysts contend that FARDC forces alone would be unable to subdue or completely defeat Nkunda. The GOR fears that Kabila will resort to using FDLR (ex-FAR/Interahamwe) troops for this purpose. Murigande noted that although Kabila had told the GOR that he would not cooperate with the FDLR, there is evidence that some of his operatives are in close discussions with the FDLR.

¶3. (C) Murigande said that FDLR forces would not provide their support to the FARDC against Nkunda without getting something in return, such as access to weapons and ammunition or a promise by the GDRC to support the FDLR goal to "overthrow or at least disturb" the GOR. He said that there are no mechanisms for the FDLR to disarm after assisting FARDC troops.

¶4. (C) The GOR sees other potential pitfalls to a military solution. Murigande said that there is no guarantee that a combined FDLR/FARDC force could defeat Nkunda and that a military "adventure" could create complications and "collateral damage" in the form of hundreds of thousands of displaced people and refugees.

¶5. (C) Murigande said that the GOR supports the GDRC's desire to exercise its sovereignty and disarm rebel groups. He said that many unauthorized armed groups are present in the DRC, but that "foreign groups" such as the FDLR perhaps represent

a greater infringement of their sovereignty. He said that if the DRC disarmed the FDLR and created security for Tutsis there, the Nkunda problem would disappear. Murigande further stated that the reason for the "Nkunda phenomenon" is the continued fear of ethnic violence toward Congolese Tutsis by FDLR forces. He also said that, as long as Nkunda's soldiers felt their families were threatened by the existence of the FDLR, they would refuse to be integrated and moved with the FARDC.

¶6. (C) Murigande requested U.S. support to encourage Kabila to pursue a political solution to the situation with Nkunda. He said that earlier talks with Nkunda had failed because Kabila succumbed to extremist pressures. Past plans to create security for Tutsis in the DRC, for refugees to be returned, and for integration of armed forces were abandoned.

Murigande said that the GOR would be willing to facilitate further rounds of talks with Nkunda to find a political resolution. He thought Nkunda could be convinced to have his troops enter brassage, rather than mixage, brigades so long as these troops remained stationed in the Kivus.

¶7. (C) Murigande said that the GOR is also pursuing bilateral talks. He had sought a meeting with his DRC counterpart at the recent AU summit in Accra. The two of them had agreed to further bilateral talks, perhaps facilitated by South Africa.

However, Kabila had said that he preferred direct talks and the GDRC had invited Murigande for a visit in late July. The timing did not work for the Rwandans, who are hosting a large AU meeting at that time, but Murigande said he is proposing alternative dates, perhaps early August.

¶8. (C) Ambassador told Murigande that cooperation by the GDRC

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with the FDLR, either overt or covert, would be a serious problem. He noted that the USG shared the GOR desire for a political solution to the Kivu problems and that the USG has delivered that message regularly. GOR efforts to find a way to resolve the Nkunda problem would be helpful. Ambassador agreed to pass GOR views on to Washington and to keep in touch on how to help resolve the current problems.

¶9. (C) In a separate conversation with the Ambassador on July 20, Belgian Ambassador Roux summarized GOB views of the Kivu situation and the results of the recent visit of Foreign Minister de Gucht. The Belgians are worried at the increasing risk of a serious military incident stemming from pressures from hardliners in the DRC and the impasse with Nkunda. The increase in FARDC military forces in the Kivu could lead to more fighting and serious consequences for the civilian population. The Foreign Minister had had good discussions with President Kagame and the GOR. (He had originally sought to visit Kinshasa first, then Kigali and then return to Kinshasa, but the GDRC had rejected this scenario.) After his visit to Kigali, the Belgian FM visited Kinshasa and met with Kabila. He told Kabila that he needed to take back Congolese refugees from Rwanda, he should ensure that there was more representation of Tutsis in both provincial and national institutions, and that he should support a new mandate for MONUC authorizing to take a more offensive role against the FDLR. Amb. Roux said this had been a difficult meeting, but not as bad as a prior one between Kabila and EU rep Louis Michel, which had been very rough. Amb. Roux said that the GOB was very disturbed by what it had heard the MONUC commander state, i.e. that if it came down to a conflict between FARDC forces allied with the FDLR against Nkunda's forces, MONUC would have to back the FARDC-FDLR side. The prospect of MONUC supporting a group which the UN has labeled terrorist and subject to sanctions shocked the GOB.

ARIETTI